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Game Day Kaimin, October 7, 2000

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Game Day
The original, complete guide to Grizzly athletics

Student of the Game
By Ryan Divish

MONTANA VS. Sacramento State
Vince Huntsberger isn't going to like this — not any of it. Not because there is something bad to write about him; there isn't. And not because there aren't enough good things to say about him, because there are.

No. Vince isn't going to like this because it's about him. And to Vince, there's nothing about Vince worth writing about.

But he's wrong. No matter how difficult he makes it, you follow him to class and to practice three times a week. And you do it every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, for his organic chemistry lecture. He is carefully taking notes on chiral carbons and the rules for their configuration. When class is finished he will jump on his bike and hurry to practice to catch the last half of it. Several questions come to mind. Why would a football player be taking this class? How can he miss an hour's worth of practice three times a week? Why take such a hard class during the season?

But the real question is: Which one of the 400 students in the class is he? To someone who has never seen him or met him, it would be impossible to pick him out of the crowd, to see "That's him, that's Vince Huntsberger." That's last year's Big Sky Conference defensive MVP.

He has probably walked by you on campus, or sat next to you in a class but you wouldn't know he was a football player. Because to the world, Vince looks like just any other student, with a plain haircut, baggy jeans and a simple T-shirt. He could have talked to you, maybe said "Hi" and you would never notice him or think anything of him except that he was Vince Huntsberger. That's last season's Big Sky Conference defensive MVP as a sophomore. He finished the season with a team-leading 90 tackles, 51 of those solo and four interceptions. He was named OTE first team Academic All-American with a 3.87 GPA in biology. Two years ago, he started as a redshirt freshman making 84 tackles and was named all-conference honorable mention. Before that, he was a two-year starter of his senior class at Libby High School with a 4.0 GPA. He always makes more than he thinks, or rather, what he wants others to think, he isn't average. It seems like this guy is good at everything: school, sports, even blending in.

But there is something that Vince isn't good at, well, besides video games. It is talking about himself and his accomplishments. To put himself in the spotlight that he tries so hard to avoid. Even the interviews and pictures for this article bring a painful, awkward look to his face that no lineman or running back could possibly cause. He squirms, he fidgets and words come out of his mouth faster than he could ever hope to run on a football field. All this attention is too much.

Ask him about last year's MVP award and he replies, "I was very surprised when I got it. It's nice to have. When you get it, it's a nice accomplishment to look back on. Right now, I can't think about it. It's a new season and there's no more MVP!"

Ask him about his GPA. "Everybody says, 'You get good grades.' The only reason that anybody even notices is because I play football."

But you want to know more. You want to know how this kid has become the poster boy for a school that you barely notice. You want a story — something, anything. He only laughs, there isn't really anything to tell, he says. He's kind of boring.

Again, Vince is wrong. There is a story. It isn't a story of a tragic fall and a touching redemption — this guy's never fallen. It's a story about a young man who reminds us what is great about college football. A story that gives us a reason to believe that the men on the playing field really are worth cheering for.

But don't ask Vince, he'll never tell it. That would mean more talking about himself and what he's done, where he has been. Impossible.

You have to find the information. The leak. Mothers will always tell. Kate Huntsberger tells all, although like her son, she pretends that she has nothing to say that will offer a glimpse into his life. She tells how a son can be so unassuming, so unselfish and so likable.

Little stories. Meaningless, insignificant, until you put them together and see the bigger picture they make.

There was the little boy from Plains at the Cal Poly game. It was his birthday and all he wanted was to meet his hero. Armed with his "I love Vince" sign, the young man got his face that no lineman or running back could possibly cause. The Libby junior high student is named all-conference.

Academic All-American with a 3.87 GPA in biology. Two years ago, he started as a redshirt freshman making 84 tackles and was named all-conference honorable mention. Before that, he was a two-year starter of his senior class at Libby High School with a 4.0 GPA. He always makes more than he thinks, or rather, what he wants others to think, he isn't average. It seems like this guy is good at everything: school, sports, even blending in.

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This year Sac State leads the conference in rushing offense and is third from the bottom in passing. And while Roberts seems to grace as many headlines as football fields, his Hornets cohorts don’t seem resentful. “We’re used to it,” said Sac State head coach John Volek. “Charles is a team member and he’s treated as a team member. A runner’s got to have blockers and our guys take pride in what he does. Charles is the kind of athlete that shares his accomplishments with his teammates.”

But this season things have been up and down for Roberts and his teammates. In the Hornets’ two non-conference games, Roberts rushed for 459 yards, leading Sac State in rushing offense. But this season things have begun to look downright one-dimensional for the Hornets.

First, Portland State overcame a formidable Sac State lead, scoring 22 unanswered points in the fourth quarter to claim victory. Then, against lowly Idaho State, a late-game fumble on the 1-yard line by Roberts sealed the Hornets’ second-straight demise.

The sting of the losses was intensified by the fact that, in the process, a few key offensive Hornets sustained minor injuries: Roberts (hip), starting quarterback Ricky Bay (abdominal strain) and fullback Mike Wooster (wrist). Despite the injuries, only Ray missed action and the following week, Sac State bounced back to crush Weber State 35-7. The victory, along with a little time to recuperate, have Volek’s squad ready for action against the defending Big Sky champs.

“I think there was some relief after the two close losses, especially after the way we lost those games ...,” Volek said. “This is the healthiest we’ve been coming into Missoula in our best health of the season.”

In fact, the Hornets feel so good about their chances, they’ve been talking about an upset in no uncertain terms. “This game is bigger than (Sac State vs. rival UC Davis), and we think we can go up there and beat (Montana),” Volek told the Sacramento Bee. “Last year, we nearly came away with a huge win. This year, I think we can get it done.”

Perhaps Volek’s confidence is warranted. Last season, the Griz had to go to double-overtime to thwart the Hornets 41-38. In that game the Hornets eclipsed a 25-point third quarter deficit before finally succumbing. Northern California determination and conviction aside, though, Montana’s defensive prowess will undoubtedly be the best Sac State has seen this season.

The Griz are currently first in conference in rushing defense, giving up an average of only 93.8 yards per game. Montana is also near the top of the conference in both scoring defense (third) and pass defense (second). Grizzly coordinator Mike Breake’s aggressive new blitz scheme will hope to press Roberts and the Hornets.

Unlike years past however, the neutralization of Roberts doesn’t necessarily leave the Hornets toothless. This season Sac State has a potent defense to compliment the conference’s No. 1 rushing offense. Senior linebacker and pre-season All-American Anthony Davis is leading the Big Sky in tackles with 43.5. Davis’ efforts are now being supplemented by the addition of fellow backer Santi Hall, who transferred to Sac State from UCLA at the end of August. Although Hall has only been with the team for a short time, he’s already become an important part of the defensive scene, Volek said.

“He picked up our defense real quick,” Volek said. “He’s a great athlete, just like some of those transfers (Montana’s) got.”

The Griz and Sac State kick off at Washington-Grizzly Stadium Saturday at 1:05 p.m.

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Casey Temple
GameDay Kaiman

Stop the presses. Idaho State is 3-1. Idaho State, the perennial Big Sky doormat, has shocked the Western football world by already matching their conference win total from last year—two.

Neither victory was easy; the Bengals won both games in the closing moments. Against Sacramento State, Hornets' running back Charles Roberts fumbled the ball on the 1-yard line, ending a drive which would have given the Hornets the victory. Instead, the ball was recovered by Bengal defensive back Josh Robinson, securing the 41-39 win.

A missed extra point by Cal State Northridge kicker Derek Brown in overtime gave Idaho State its second consecutive conference win, 31-30.

Idaho State routed NAIA foe Montana Tech, 58-10, in their opening game. Their only loss was to Eastern Montana on Nov. 4, hoping to defeat the Griz in Missoula for the first time since 1994.

Casey Temple
GameDay Kaiman

Senior linebacker Junior Ioane and Dawson have combined for more than 50 tackles already this year. Dawson also has two sacks.

Idaho State will visit Montana on Nov. 4, hoping to defeat the Griz in Missoula for the first time since 1994.

The best game in the Big Sky this weekend will be a non-conference match-up between No. 4 Portland State and No. 10 Hostfra, who defeated Montana 10-9 earlier this season.

The Vikings will use Hostfra as a measuring stick as to how good they really are. Portland State defeated Division I-A Hawaii 45-20 earlier this season and beat Northern Arizona for the first time in the school's history, with a 42-10 win. Portland State also beat Sacramento State, 35-23.

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Cross country teams push for berth in regionals, nationals

Courtney Lowery
GameDay Kaimin

There are two things that can make or break a volleyball squad: momentum and chemistry.

UM head volleyball coach Nikki Best said slowly but surely, her team is peaking at that this weekend.

"We wanted to peak for the conference and regional meets," head coach Tom Raunig said. "But we are progressing very fast on the men's side and the women have had two very strong meets in a row."

Monro, a junior from Montana City, has continued her winning ways during the last two meets. At the Montana Invitational two weeks ago, Monro completed the women's race just short of one minute ahead of her nearest competitor. And just one week later she emerged victorious over a talented field at the Big Cross Invitational in Washington, winning the race by 30 seconds.

Sabrina's consistency is a big plus for us," Raunig said. "At the bigger meets it really helps to have her out in front."

Led by Monro, Montana has already grabbed wins over both Montana State and Idaho State (at the Montana Invitational) and placed third runners in the top 15 in the Big Cross Invitational.

The sweep over the field at the Montana Invitational brought with it an unexpected win over Montana State.

On the men's side, the Griz fell at home during the Montana Invitational to the Bobcats, ending a three-meet winning streak over MSU. The Grizzlies did top Idaho State at the Montana Invitational and finished second to then 19th ranked Washington at the Big Cross Invitational.

At home, Grizzly harrier Brad Treat placed second overall. And Jesse Barnes finished fourth.

Raunig said the strength of his men's squad is based on a pack mentality.

"We have no big front runners," he said. "Our top four are very strong, and the fifth spot is handled by committee."

Raunig went on to say that the goal of the men's team is to lower their pack split times as they move toward the conference meet.

The Grizzly men were severely hampered at the Big Cross as several runners were suffering from colds. Montana managed to hold onto second place, just three points ahead of Washington State despite five of their nine runners being ill.

The women's team will receive a boost when senior Heather Anderson returns to the team after being treated for a nagging injury. "Heather has not run yet," Raunig said. "We are hoping to get her running at a high level as soon as possible, she could make the difference between going to nationals and not."

The Grizzlies, with just over three weeks to go until the Big Sky Conference meet, are working toward a berth in the regional and national meets.

Thirty-one teams from around the country compete in the National Championships. "We want to place high at the Big Sky meet and then go on to regionals," Raunig said.

Volleyball team hopes momentum continues through road swing

Cory Myers/Kaimin

UM volleyball players Lizzie Wertz, right, and Natlie Jacksha run through practice drills Tuesday afternoon.

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Cory Myers/Kaimin

Number one outside hitter Erin Adams leads UM, racking up 10 or more kills in nine matches and 10 or more digs as well. Connor is ranked second in the conference with 33.33 assists per game and senior Kori Taylor continues to be a defensive force at the net with 74 blocks on the season.

The Grizzlies play Eastern Washington at 7 p.m. Saturday in the Western Auxiliary Gym.

 attitude that 'It's OK, We're on the road,' but that is not what kind of attitude we are going to have this year," said senior outside hitter Erin Adams.

Adams and senior setter Tara Conner agreed, however, that the road trip philosophy is already changing.

"We're just taking it game to game, keeping it high energy and making sure we have the confidence to win on the road," Conner said.

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Montana vs. Sacramento State
Montana 2000 Record • 8-3 Overall, 1-0 Big Sky
1999 Record • 9-3 Overall, 7-1 Big Sky (1st)

Offense

Thatcher Szalay
Offensive Guard
6-5, 295 Junior from Whitefish, Mont.

Adam Boomer
Linebacker
6-2, 225 Senior from American Falls, Idaho

Defense

Grizzly Offense VS.

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Charles Roberts was named to the Big Sky first team All-Big Sky selection in 1999. The 1999 season was a big season for Roberts, who had 89 tackles and 10 quarterback sacks, which was a Sacramento State record. Despite his injuries, the pint-sized back still led Division l-AA with 1.98 sacks ranking 3rd in the nation. Regardless of his accomplishments, Roberts lost the game for the Hornets when he fumbled on the 1-yard line in the closing moments against Idaho State.

In '00, Daisley is leading the Big Sky in tackles and sacks with 43.5 tackles and 3 sacks.
Scouting Report:

Jason Mohr
GameDay Kaimin

The Griz have played them rarely, but their nine appearances in the NCAA Division I-AA playoffs since 1985 prove

arguably one of the toughest leagues in I-AA football, the Gateway Conference. Fellow Gateway Conference member Youngstown State ended the Grizzlies’ 1999 campaign in the first round of the playoffs.

Northern Iowa last made the post-season in 1996. In 1994, the Griz lost the Panthers 23-20 in Muncie in the first round of the playoffs.

But to make it to the big show this year, the Panthers know they must win the rest of their games after suffering losses in their second and third contests to Boise State and Southern Illinois.

Assistant head coach Jeff Zenisek said that the Northern Iowa staff is a little frustrated with their 3-2 record this season.

We lost the one we should have lost and won the ones we should have won, I guess,” he said.

The Panthers have rebounded from their early losses, defeating on national­ly ranked Stephen F. Austin and conference opponent Illinois State. By virtue of these wins, Northern Iowa finds itself ranked No. 22 in the Sports Network poll.

In addition to a national ranking, Northern Iowa has received a fair amount of attention as the program that produced 2000 Super Bowl MVP Kurt Warner.

Zenisek said that the Panthers of the early 1990s played a more traditional style offense and that Warner got a lot of his expertise playing and learning the game.

“You’ve got to get rid of the ball in three seconds (in spread offenses) and that Warner is producing at a level of No. 2-ranked Youngstown State and No. 11-ranked Western Illinois. Zenisek said that Youngstown State, like Montana, is a program to watch out for year after year.

And what will the end of this year hold for the Panthers? “Sometimes our league will get two or three (teams) in,” Zenisek said, referring to the 1-AA playoffs. “But, it’s better to be (No.) one or two.”

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Division I-AA Top 25

1. Georgia Southern (63)
2. Youngstown State (62)
3. Appalachian State
4. Portland State (16)
5. Troy State (13)
6. Furman (11)
7. Delaware
8. Appalachian State
9. Mississippi
10. Hofstra
11. Western Illinois
12. Villanova
13. James Madison
14. Stephen F. Austin
15. Northwestern State
16. Richmond
17. Idaho
18. Eastern Kentucky
19. Massachusetts
20. Western Kentucky
21. North Carolina A&T
22. Northern Iowa Panthers
23. Eastern Washington
24. Northern Arizona
25. Hangzhou
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Montana soccer is well on its way to another successful season after starting 7-3-1, with six shutouts posted against its opponents.

One year after playing its way into the NCAA tournament for the first time in team history, head coach Betsy Duerksen's squad hasn't let up. A lot of players lead the team offensively, but Heather Olson stands out as the most successful scorer, with eight goals so far.

Montana's defense has also been stellar, despite starting two freshmen in the back. Senior goalkeeper Natalie Hiller, currently hobbled by an ankle injury, has also been very consistent and has five shutouts to her credit. "I think so far the season has gone really well," Duerksen said. "I have a great team to work with. They're playing well, they're coachable and we've been winning, so there's not a lot to complain about. We have all the key ingredients to be a successful team."

The Grizzlies played only two conference games in the first five weeks of the season, and have five left. In their first two conference matches, Montana scored eight goals and allowed zero. Last week against conference foe Eastern Washington, freshman goalkeeper Katie Peck recorded a shutout and sophomore forward Amy Schlatter capped the game off with her first career goal.

Olson leads the team with 18 points. She now ranks sixth on Montana's all-time scoring list and fourth in goals scored. Freshman forward Amy Wronski is next with five goals and two assists. But all the goals scored by Wronski and Olson wouldn't have been possible without assist leader, senior Jodi Campbell. Campbell has recorded five assists and three goals and ranks fifth in career points with 59. Much of Montana's success, however, can be credited to a very reliable defense. It has allowed only 13 goals and has enabled the offensive team to score 22, despite being outshot by the majority of their opponents. The defense is also responsible for three consecutive shutouts against Northwestern University.

Montana has six games left on its regular season schedule, with five of those being conference matches. The last four regular season games will be played at home with the venue for conference matches determined by the regular season champion.
The highlight for the Missoula County High School in guys loved to play, and they got Vinal said when he was drafted in unit” there and wound up the last one learned from the UM marching trombone player, but I went in through the early 1950s.

The music consisted solely of marches. The uniforms were maroon and silver with gold trim. Vinal, a trombonist, remembers being bowled over by the quality of the band’s musicians. “I thought I was a pretty good trombone player, but I went in there and wound up the last one in my section,” Vinal said. “The guys loved to play, and they got along real good together.”

Vinal said the lasting lesson he learned from the UM marching band was marching discipline. Vinal said when he was drafted in 1943, he immediately became the first trombonist in the U.S. Army band.

“The army we did a lot of marching, but it was old hat after being in the marching band at the University of Montana,” Vinal said. “I was able to march without even thinking about it.”

Women join the ranks
In 1907 the band got radical: it admitted six women to the ranks.

Esther Williams was one of UM’s first female pep band members.

In 1937 the band got radical: it admitted six women to the ranks.

Esther Williams was one of UM’s first female pep band members.
"My big role models would be my parents," Huntsberger says. "Just how they are and how they raised me. I've never been really big into sports role models."

His parents gave him the ever-present work ethic. "We always had to work to get what we wanted," Vince says. "It wasn't even just given to us."

Whether it was mowing the lawn or stacking wood, Vince and his siblings did it. There was no sitting around and watching TV. And that work ethic has shifted to the classroom and the football field alike. Because, as Vince will eagerly explain, he isn't the smartest person in the classroom. "I'm not going to say I'm dumb," he says. "I'm a smart kid, but I still have to work really hard to get good grades. I'm not the kind of guy who reads the chapter once and rolls in and sees the test." He isn't your classic strong safety, either. He is probably one of the slowest Grizzly defensive backs. He only weighs 195 pounds and stands just a shade over six feet. "I had a kid tell me last year, 'I thought you'd be bigger,'" he laughs. "They have this impression that you have to be 6-2, 230 pounds and just ripped. I guess I have to work with what I've got."

And what he has got is an intense competitiveness that far outweighs any physical force. "I'm competitive at every­thing," says Kate. "One time when he was little he wanted to skip going to a basketball game and stay home and play scrabble because I beat him the night before."

Griz head coach Joe Glenn: "He has that look. He's on a mission. He's a competitor and I think whatever the task at hand, whether it's school or a game he's going to compete. He just has a burning desire to win at everything he does. He doesn't know half-speed. If a coach says that we're only going to go through this half-speed, he goes just a little bit harder to win. He's a fierce competitor." An undersized safety, Vince uses every ounce of his being to hit with rabid ferocity, and can't stand to lose. To Griz fans, it all sounds eerily familiar.

Tim Hauck was twice named Big Sky Conference defensive MVP - a man who used to be a guy like him. His own parents didn't know half-speed. If a coach says he's only going to go through this half-speed, he goes just a little bit harder to win. He's a fierce competitor. Tim Hauck's style of play a few days ago. Hauck said he was watching film of last season's game against Sac State and one particular play, the ball reversed across the field and there was Tim running across the field and automatic teammates to get to the ball carrier. "That reminded me a lot of the way Tim played," Hauck said. "Wherever the play ended, he was there."

For Vince, Tim Hauck's NFL career remains a dream. He talks of graduate school or possibly coaching when he's done. But don't rule the NFL out completely. As Griz secondary coach Dave Doeren says, "Vince is a great college player. Could be on the way to play in the NFL. I don't know. I wouldn't doubt it, because if there is anybody that could do it, it would be him."

Huntsberger is the cornerstone of Doeren's secondary and recipient of endless praise. "He's a great person," Doeren says. "If you ever wanted to have a good friend you'd want it to be a guy like him. He's very genuine and means what he says. He has this presence with kids. He's a straight shooter and that's what's best about him. Whatever Vince decides to do, he'll be good at it."

But that is the future. Vince is all about the here and now. There is still a little matter of another conference title, and making it past the first round of the I-AA playoffs. But there has to be more to Vince Huntsberger than this, doesn't there? Where is the drama? Where is the lurking tragedy? The inevitable redemption? We need more, but Vince isn't telling.